

Waste Collection Companies Meeting June 24, 2004

Attendees: Joan Carr, John Hasle, Chuck Minor, and Conrad Mehan
County Staff: Joyce Doughty, Jeff Smithberger, Linda Boone

John Hasle of Reston Trash indicated that his current Savings Statement from the county overestimated his savings by 40% for FY04. County staff will check to ensure that the Savings Statement were accurately estimating the savings.

Reason for Meetings

During the discussions about the formation of the Solid Waste Management Program Task Force at a meeting with solid waste collectors on May 20th, the question was asked how waste collectors would learn about the workings of the Task Force. The current time and day of the week were set by the collectors at the May 20 meeting, so that staff could brief them about the discussions of the Task Force.

A revision to the time and place of future meetings was discussed thoroughly because everyone wanted the meetings to be responsive to the needs of the collection companies.

A survey of all the collection companies was suggested and approved by the companies present. The survey should ask if the companies would participate in future meetings, best day of the week and time, and what the best ways would be to communicate written information to the companies. The minutes from the Task Force will be posted on the website once approved. Collectors were asked if it was OK to post the notes from the collection meetings on the website also. All agreed that they could check the website, but would like to get copies either by email, fax or mail. One of the companies suggested also that the frequency of the meetings may be too often and perhaps the meetings should be quarterly instead of monthly.

Staff will draft a survey and get it to all collection companies quickly.

Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP)

Joyce reported that the SWMP was approved by the Board of Supervisors without the 5-year notice provisions. The approved Plan was sent to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality on June 22.

Solid Waste Management Program Task Force (SWMP TF)

The first meeting was held on June 8. The minutes from that meeting will be posted on the website after being approved at the next meeting on June 29.

FY2005 Rates

The new FY2005 rates were mailed to all companies earlier this month. Rates do not always increase. Tires are \$10/ton less this year at \$50/ton at least through November 30, 2004. Vacuum leaves will be \$30 /ton, a decrease of \$10 per ton since the county can process vacuum leaves more cheaply.

Future Contracts

There are three potential contracts the county will be preparing in the near future that collectors may want to review:

- Assistance with leaf collection
- Bulk refuse collection
- Disaster assistance management contract— this will be contingency contract for assistance in the event of a declared disaster and will include materials such as arboreal waste, buildings materials, etc. There may be various line items that need processing. Disposal methods may allow for such processing as air curtain incineration, which can only be initiated in emergency or disaster circumstances.

Disaster assistance. A company asked if there was a way to also look at the increased disposal costs resulting from weather events or disasters that would help the collectors meet the increased costs of disposal such as increased food waste, wet/damaged clothing and household items, and other waste that is generated by a disaster/weather.

It was suggested that the county has contingency funds or reserves to cover unplanned cost increases and that businesses may want to have similar funds to cover emergencies, if they don't already.

If county waives tipping fees we cannot get reimbursement for those fees (which help pay our increased costs) from FEMA. An area must be designated a disaster area in order to claim expenses from FEMA. We can explore ways to deal with disasters in conjunction with the work being planned by the Task Force.

Leaf and bulk refuse – Could the contracts be written for services over 12 months vs. seasonal? Yes, if it was an RFP it could be a 3 year contract, and would not necessarily have to be low bid, but best proposal for providing the services. The RFP is in development currently. Risk Management is reviewing whether vendors could be allowed to use Fairfax County's equipment (leaf blowers, etc) to perform the leaf assistance contract.

Collectors voiced the same concerns with temporary labor and buying seasonal equipment as were mentioned by county staff as the reasons for contracting for these services.

County Mandates

County requirements have increased over the last 20 years. Is there perhaps a way to review what the county requires collectors to do? Yes, work is currently underway to review Chapter 109. Also the Task Force will be considering several operational issues that may impact how waste is collected in the county.

Separate yard waste collections. Not only is yard waste collection a service demanded by citizens, it is also needed to save capacity in the waste-to-energy facility as well as maintain recycling rates. A collector suggested that perhaps the number of months for yard waste collection could be limited to spring and fall months instead of the current 9 months. It was alleged that mixing of yard waste and trash occurs in sanitary districts (Huntington) as well as areas collected by private companies.

Townhome communities that have grounds maintenance companies can get an exemption from separate collection of yard waste since presumably their private yard areas do not generate a significant amount of yard waste.

A recycling survey by one collection company found that few customers use the yard waste program but all pay for it. It was suggested that perhaps yard waste collection could be by subscription or limited to spring and fall months. Leaves could be collected based on a per-bag charge or using a vacuum system.

Limit on trucks in neighborhoods. A collector asked if it was practical for collection companies to voluntarily limit or coordinate the days they would collect in a neighborhood? No.

A collector suggested that single stream recycling will make a difference (if it happens) in the number of trucks in the neighborhoods.

Collection frequency. Many customers want twice weekly collection service. Customer service and business development by collectors need to be able to meet the needs and wants of different customers.

Use of kraft bags. How will customers react to a proposal to prohibit plastic bags for collection of yard waste? Many will not be happy and will want more totes. The county could buy kraft bags, but that is not a practical approach. Other local jurisdictions ban plastic bags and their customers have accepted it.

Posting of Meeting Notes

The collectors agreed it was OK to post these notes on the Task Force website.

Recycling status

If the recycling recommendations from the Solid Waste Management Plan are implemented for curbside and business recycling, there will be increased mixed paper and plastic bottles. The collectors are concerned that there will be a place to dispose of these increased amounts locally. The county needs to be a back-up if we go to single stream recycling. The collectors do not want to be dependent just on the existing markets. It was suggested that if the amounts warranted, a bay might be dedicated at the I-66 Transfer Station to have a place to dump the recyclables and county could process them.

Would recycling be easier if one of the existing materials was eliminated? Glass could be eliminated and then the system could have almost single stream recycling since glass is a significant contaminant in recycling currently. Recycling glass in other places has been problematic. Removing glass could reduce recycling weights since glass weighs heavy. However, the tons of glass collected are already down since so many containers are now plastic.

Collection companies would like to have something official from the county that says what needs to be recycled and how.

Covanta cold-iron outage

Covanta's Energy Resource Recovery Facility (E/RRF) will soon have a major maintenance effort that occurs about every 5 years. The cold-iron outage will be from October 2-5, 2004. Cooling towers, turbines and header systems will be inspected and maintained during the outage. The county will manage this outage as it has others in the past by allowing only Fairfax County waste into the facility starting in September. Prince William County landfill will be one of the backup disposal sites during the outage. The working face of their landfill is small now, but a new cell will open in August. The county will divert waste to other landfills as needed to maintain the pit at the E/RRF.

Beginning in July, Prince William County is restricting collection companies in the amounts of waste they can deliver to the ERRF (50,000 annually) without paying an additional disposal charge. The exchange of yard waste for trash in the Agreement with Prince William County has not been equitable during recent years. For detailed information, contact Prince William County.

Staff assignments

County staff will prepare a survey about how to increase meeting attendance. We want a quick turnaround on the survey.

FUTURE SOLID WASTE COLLECTORS' MEETINGS WILL BE ON HOLD UNTIL THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY CAN DETERMINE A TIME/DAY/FREQUENCY WHEN MORE COMPANIES COULD PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETINGS.